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EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

⑤ Int. Cl.⁴: **A 63 H 3/00**

②② Date of filing: 25.11.87

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⑤④ Combined soft sculpture and blanket.

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Description

Combined Soft Sculpture and Blanket

Background of the Invention

Plush soft figures such as dolls and stuffed animals have delighted children and adults for many years. The figures have taken on an indescribable number of appearances and are loved by young and old alike. Very young children are particularly fond of such figures, holding and caressing them for hours at a time.

Infants and young children are very interested in touching and manipulating the objects in the world surrounding them, and have an insatiable curiosity about how things are put together. Infants closely study the activities of their parents and enjoy watching them assemble and disassemble the myriad of toys adapted for that purpose. It is well-known that observing the construction and the disassembly of objects assist infants in developing their cognitive processes, and as they grow older, the children develop motor skills and eye-hand coordination by doing for themselves what they observed their parents doing.

Children also love soft cuddly things to cover themselves with, squeeze, roll up or lie on.

Accordingly, the principal object of this invention is to provide an article which serves the purposes discussed above, and many others. The convertible figure described and claimed herein has the capability of being configured into a soft doll or toy such as a teddy bear, and also to be configured into a substantially flat covering means such as a blanket. In contrast with other attempts to develop articles having similar capabilities, the present invention employs unique means which enable the entire article to lie essentially flat, as a blanket having an applique attached to its surface. Therefore, the present invention achieves a very neat appearance as both a figure and a covering means through the use of unique and unobvious construction techniques facilitating a quick and easy change from one configuration to the other.

Summary of the Invention

It is an object of the invention to provide a convertible figure i.e. an article which is convertible between a first configuration in which it appears to be, and is functionable as a soft-sculptural toy in the nature of a stuffed animal, doll, fantastic creature or the like, and a second configuration in which a blanket, which was rolled and/or folded into a closed cavity within the body of the creature, remains attached to the body, but lies outside the cavity so that it can be spread and used as a covering, while the resultingly de-stuffed remainder of the soft-sculptural creature remains visible as an applique on the outside of the blanket.

In a broad aspect of the invention, a convertible figure is provided with a body formed by body members which define a cavity within the body. Covering means are attached to the body members and are adapted to fit into the cavity and also to be

removed from the cavity.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, the body includes a head and a torso.

In yet another aspect of the invention, the cavity is defined by portions of both the head and the torso.

The convertible figure has two configurations; namely, a first configuration wherein the covering means is enclosed within the cavity and a second configuration wherein the covering means is outside the cavity.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, the head of the convertible figure includes a first face visible when the figure is configured in its first configuration, and a second face which is visible when the figure is configured in its second configuration. As the figure is changed from its first to its second configuration and vice versa, the first and second faces are reversed. The two faces are joined together and configured such that when the convertible figure is in its first configuration the cavity in the head is located in a space between the body members forming the first and second faces. A portion of the covering means is then housed within this cavity. In its second configuration, the covering means is removed from this cavity located between the two faces, the second face is reversed, and the covering means is withdrawn from the cavity.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, at least one first upper appendage, such as a hat or a horn, is attached to the head and is visible when the figure is configured in its first configuration. At least one second upper appendage is also attached to the head and it is visible when the figure is configured in its second configuration. In practice, as the first and second faces are reversed the first upper appendage is concealed and the second is exposed or vice versa. A plurality of first and second upper appendages may be attached to the head. For example, the appendages may be ears, horns, ears in combination with a hat, etc.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, the convertible figure further comprises at least one first middle appendage attached to the torso and visible when the figure is configured in its first configuration, and at least one second middle appendage attached to the torso and visible when the figure is configured in its second configuration. These middle appendages may be arms, tentacles, etc. As the convertible figure is reversed from one to the other, the first and second middle appendages would be alternatively concealed and exposed.

In yet another aspect of the invention, reversing means are provided in the head for passing the upper appendage or appendages through the reversing means whereby the upper appendage or appendages are visible when the figure is configured in either its first or second configuration. For example, the reversing means may be a slot through which an ear may pass as the head is reversed to show either the first or second face.

In a further aspect of the invention, reversing

means are included in the torso for passing the middle appendage or appendages through said reversing means whereby the same middle appendage or appendages are visible when the figure is configured in either its first or second configurations. The reversing means may be a passage through which an arm passes as the reconfiguration takes place.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, the torso includes means for removing the covering means from the cavity when the figure is converted from its first configuration to its second configuration. The means for removing may be a closable opening which when opened exposes the cavity and the covering means located therein. The covering means is then pulled from the cavity during the conversion of the figure from its first to its second configuration. This opening is also the means through which the covering means is inserted into the cavity as the figure is converted from its second to first configuration. The means for removing is closed when the figure is in its second configuration giving the figure a neat appearance.

In another aspect, the figure may include at least one lower appendage, such as a leg or legs, dependent from the torso. The lower appendage or appendages are adapted to be visible when the figure is configured in both its first and second configurations.

In another aspect of the invention, the means for removing includes means for opening the body members which define the cavity, for gaining access to the covering means located within the cavity when the figure is in its first configuration and as means for replacing the covering means into the cavity when the figure is configured in its second configuration.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, means are provided for reversing the first and second faces when the figure is converted from its first to its second configuration and vice versa.

In another aspect of the invention, means are provided for closing the body members after the covering means is removed from the cavity as the figure is being converted from its first to its second configuration.

In accordance with another feature of the invention, the body members forming the torso have a first and a second side, the first side being visible when the figure is configured in its first configuration and a second side being visible when the figure is configured in its second configuration. The means for closing the body members is located on one side of the figure when the figure is configured in its second configuration and the means for opening the body members is located on the opposite side of the figure when the figure is configured in its first configuration.

In accordance with another feature of the invention, the body members are adapted to lie substantially flat on the covering means when the figure is configured in its second configuration.

A soft-sculptural creature is provided with a torso having a front panel and a back panel respectively having upper edges joined to the front and rear of the perimeter of a neck, opening into a hollow head.

The front half of the head is stuffed and has a face. Stuffed arms and legs are attached at respective ends to the front panel. The soft-sculptural creature is sandwiched onto a marginal portion of a blanket at a location offset to one side of the top edge of the blanket and the front panel is sewn around at least part of its perimeter to the blanket. The blanket can be removably stuffed into the soft-sculptural creature by rolling, folding or similarly condensing the blanket, stuffing some of it into the back half of the head through the neck opening, removably joining corresponding parts of the left margins of the front and rear panels to one another, corresponding parts of the right margins of the front and rear panels to one another, and wrapping rearwardly a flap provided on the front panel and removably joining it to the lower margin of the back panel. When the blanket is opened out and in use, the back panel can be stuffed into the back half of the head, and a person covered by the blanket can lie with an arm curled around the neck of the soft-sculptural creature.

The principles of the invention will be further discussed with reference to the drawings wherein a preferred embodiment is shown. The specifics illustrated in the drawings are intended to exemplify, rather than limit, aspects of the invention as defined in the claims.

Brief Description of the Drawings

In the Drawings

Figure 1 is a front view of a convertible figure having the features of a bear;

Figure 2 is a back view of the convertible figure of Figure 1 showing certain internal features depicted in phantom lines;

Figure 3 is a top view of a convertible figure configured in its second configuration and appearing as an applique on a covering means;

Figure 4 is a schematic side view of a convertible figure depicted in its second configuration and having one of the body members open;

Figure 5 is a section view of the figure in Figure 1 along plane V - V;

Figure 6 is a section view of the head along a plane VI - VI in Figure 1;

Figure 7 is a section view of the head along a plane VII - VII in Figure 3;

Figure 8 is a bottom view of the convertible figure at a mid-stage of the converting process;

Figure 9 is a construction detail of an alternative embodiment depicting the use of two sets of arms;

Figure 10 is a perspective view from above, of a person asleep under the blanket while cuddling the soft-sculptural creature, both of the combined soft sculpture and blanket of the present invention;

Figure 11 is a fragmentary exploded side view of a combined soft sculpture and blanket embodying principles of the present invention;

Figure 12 is a fragmentary longitudinal sectional view thereof taken on the medial line of

the soft-sculptural creature and showing the rear panel of the torso stored in the back half of the head.

Figure 13 is a front elevational view of the soft-sculptural creature, with the blanket completely stowed inside its body cavity as a stuffing thereof.

Figure 14 is a left side elevational view of the stuffed soft-sculptural creature of Figure 4; and

Figure 15 is a rear elevational view thereof.

Detailed Description

The term "creature" is used herein generically to denote the depiction of an animal, whether real or fantastic or other typical subject matter of plush toys used by children and others as decorative, doll-like and/or cuddle objects, whether the depicted object is a simulated real one, or a partly or wholly fantastic one, a cartoon character, an anthropomorphic fruit or vegetable, food (such as a candy kiss, or a cookie), or a packaged consumer product, such as a box of laundry detergent, all simulated in whole or in part by plush fabric, or the like, with applied graphics, or the like.

The term "blanket" is used herein generically to include any covering of the blanket type, whether it is one that most people would specifically call by the name blanket, or by an at least partly analogous term such as quilt, comforter, coverlet, lap robe, afghan, bedsheet, bedspread, futon, duvet, sleeping bag, or the like.

One embodiment of a convertible figure embodying principles of the present invention, an embodiment which includes a body, body members forming the body of the figure, a cavity defined by the body members, covering means attached to the body members, the covering means adapted to fit into the cavity when the figure is configured in its first configuration as a plush bear doll, and the covering means adapted to be removed from the cavity when the convertible figure is configured in its second configuration as a covering means, is depicted in Figures 1 through 8.

A body 2 having the shape of a bear is depicted in the drawings as the general shape of the present invention. However, any shape of figure may be chosen including human shapes, other animals such as kittens, dogs, rabbits, etc. Insect shapes may be used as well as aquatic creatures such as fish or octopus. In other words, virtually any figure having a body may be used to practice the invention described and claimed herein.

Body members 4, which in the preferred embodiment are surfaces which define the shape of the bear figure, form the body 2 of the figure. Portions of the body members 4 define a cavity 6 within the body 2. Covering means are shown in the preferred embodiment as blanket 8 which is adapted to fit into the cavity 6 as depicted in Figure 5. When the blanket 8 is removed from the cavity 6 it can be laid flat as is depicted in Figure 3.

The preferred embodiment has a body 2 which includes a head 10 and a torso 12. The cavity 6 is defined by portions of both the head 10 and the torso 12. Therefore, the cavity 6 is formed by the

entire body 2.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 depict the preferred embodiment of the convertible figure in its first configuration 14. The second configuration 16 can be seen in Figure 3, which shows the blanket 8 outside the cavity 6. The left flap 44 is also shown partially opened, as would be the case during a conversion process, as will be described below.

The head 10 includes a first face 18 which is shown in Figure 1 as a muzzle having a nose, mouth and eyes in the closed position. A second face 20 is depicted in Figure 2 in phantom lines as a muzzle with nose, mouth and eyes in the closed position. Second face 20 is also depicted in Figure 3. When the convertible figure is configured in its first configuration, as is depicted in Figure 6, first face 18 is visible and second face 20 is hidden within cavity 6. In its second configuration depicted in Figure 7, the convertible figure has its second face 20 visible with its first face 18 hidden below it.

First face 18 is attached to blanket 8 in Figure 6 by head stitches 52 located at the periphery of the first face 18. Second face 20 is attached to blanket 8 along its periphery, which coincides with the periphery of first face 18, except that neck 54 is unattached. When the convertible figure is being reconfigured from its second configuration 16 to its first configuration 14, blanket 8 is rolled and folded at its top part 26 to a position which in Figure 4 would be substantially below first face 18 and second face 20. Second face 20 is then reversed over the top 26 of blanket 8 forming a pocket 28 around the blanket top 26. As can be seen from referring to Figures 4, 6 and 7 the second face 20 which was visible when the figure was configured in its second configuration 16 now faces the interior of pocket 28 after the reversal of the faces. The first face 18 which was concealed in the portion of the cavity 6 formed by the head 10, i.e. pocket 28, is now visible after the reversal is completed.

This process is reversed when the figure is being converted from its second configuration 16 to the first configuration 14. The blanket top 26 is pulled from pocket 28, second face 20 is reversed over first face 18 whereby second face 20 becomes exposed and first face 18 becomes hidden.

The preferred embodiment of the convertible figure, which depicts a bear, has two upper appendages which are first ears attached to head 10. The first upper appendages are first ears 30 which are visible when the figure is configured in its first configuration. It has second upper appendages; namely, second ears 32, which are visible when the figure is configured in its second configuration, but which are concealed within pocket 28 when the figure is configured in its first configuration. As the first and second faces 18 and 20 are reversed when the convertible figure is converted from its second to first configurations and vice versa, first ears 30 or second ears 32 are alternately exposed.

Alternatively, instead of there being at least one first upper appendage and at least one second upper appendage, i.e. first ears 30 and second ears 32, only one set of upper appendages, or one upper appendage needs to be provided if an upper

appendage reversing means such as slot 34 is utilized. Looking to Figures 3 and 4, as the figure in its second configuration 16 is being converted to its first configuration 14, second face 20 is reversed over blanket top 26 exposing first face 18. Employing slot 34, ear 31 is then passed through the slot so that it is visible at the same time that first face 18 is visible. Converting the figure from its first to second configurations is merely the reverse of the above with second face 20 being reversed over first face 18 and ear 31 being passed through slot 34 so that ear 31 and face 20 are simultaneously visible.

The preferred embodiment also utilizes middle appendages which, in the case of a bear, are arms or forelegs. First middle appendages are depicted as first arms 36 which are attached to torso 12 and which are visible when the figure is configured in its first configuration 14. First arms 36, and all of the other appendages discussed herein, may be attached by any suitable means including stitching. Second middle appendages are shown as second arms 38. The use of first arms 36 and second arms 38 is similar to the operation of ears 30 and second ears 32. When the figure is configured in its first configuration 14, then first arms 36 are visible, and when the figure is converted to its second configuration 16, second arms 38 are visible. Because the arms are bulkier than the ears, in the preferred embodiment it is preferable to employ middle appendage reversing means in the torso for passing the middle appendages therethrough during the reversal process.

The middle appendage reversing means in the torso are shown as passages 40. As the torso portion of the body is reversed, the arms 36 are passed through the passages 40 making the arms 36 visible when the figure is configured in either its first or second configurations.

Reversing the torso 12 portion of the body 2 from its first configuration 14 to the second configuration 16 will now be explained. The torso 12 includes means for removing the covering means or blanket 8 from the cavity 6 when the figure is converted from its first configuration 14 to its second configuration 16. The means for removing is depicted in the drawing as a means for opening depicted as closure 42, left flap 44 and right flap 46. In the preferred embodiment, closure 42 comprises a hook and loop fastening means such as Velcro which joins the left flap 44 and right flap 46 located on the back of the figure. When the figure is configured in its first configuration 14, the lower portion 48 of the blanket 8 is rolled and folded and enclosed within the portion of cavity 6 located within torso 12. When converting the figure from its first to second configuration, the means for opening or closure 42 is opened and left flap 44 and right flap 46 are allowed to open freely. The lower portion 48 of blanket 8 is then unrolled and unfolded from the portion of the cavity 6 located within torso 12. The top portion 26 of blanket 8 is then withdrawn from the pocket 28 and second face 20 is reversed behind first face 18. The entire blanket 8 may then be laid flat. Left flap 44 and right flap 46 are then closed on the surface of blanket 8 as will be described below.

A face reversing means for reversing the first and second faces when the figure is converted from the first to the second configuration and vice versa, is shown in the preferred embodiment in Figures 6 and 7. Figure 6 is a cross-sectional view of portions of the head configured in the first configuration 14, and Figure 7 is a cross-sectional view of head 10 in its second configuration 16. The face reversing means includes the following. As can be seen in Figure 6, first face 18 is visible when head 10 is configured in its first configuration. Second face 20 is enclosed within pocket 28 and is not visible. Head stitches 52 join the two faces together to form pocket 28 within which top portion 26 of blanket 8 is contained. During the reversal process, the top portion 26 of the blanket 8 is removed from pocket 28, second face 20, which is loose at neck 54 is turned over on top of first face 18 concealing first face 18 and exposing second face 20. In effect, pocket 28 is turned inside out concealing the exterior portions of the pocket 28 on which first face 18 is located and exposing the interior portions of the pocket 28 on which second face 20 is located.

It may be helpful to an understanding of the operation of the present invention to explain briefly the technique of constructing the figure depicted in the drawings. Initially, a blanket 8 is chosen which has appropriate dimensional, thickness and surface characteristics. A first face 18 of an appropriate size is then applied to the surface of blanket 8 by any suitable means such as embroidery or heat bonding. Decorations such as a bow 56 are applied in the same manner as first face 18. First ears 30, first arm 36, and second arm 38 are attached to the surface of blanket 8 by any suitable means such as stitching. The ears and arms are, of course, sized and positioned in the proper places to make the figure, which in the preferred embodiment is a bear, appear to have the correct form which such a figure should have. Additionally, at least one lower appendage may be attached to the surface of blanket 8 which, when construction is complete, will have the appearance of being dependent from the torso 12. In the preferred embodiment, two lower appendages are attached, and are legs 58. The legs 58 are attached in such a manner so that they are visible when the figure is configured in both its first and second configurations. This attachment can be made in any suitable manner such as by stitching at junction 60. The legs 58 are joined only at junction 60 allowing them to be moved freely when the figure is configured either in its first configuration 14 or its second configuration 16.

Continuing with the construction details, the second face 20 is applied to a piece of fabric 62 in any appropriate manner such as embroidery. Fabric 62 and second face 20 have substantially the same size and configuration as first face 18, but may also have differences. For example, while second face 20 may show closed eyes, first face 18 may show open eyes. Different faces entirely may be chosen to give the figure a completely different appearance when it is configured in either its first or second configurations. The fabric 62 on which is applied second face 20 is attached to the surface of blanket 8 over first

face 18, concealing first face 18. Fabric 62 may be attached by any appropriate means, including stitching. During construction, ears 30 are folded down toward the muzzle on first face 18 so as to be concealed inside pocket 28 which is formed between the blanket 8 and fabric 62 after fabric 62 is attached to blanket 8. Fabric 62 is attached around its entire periphery except for at the neck 54 which is left open. Second ears 32 are then sewn to surface 8 in the appropriate place to give the bear, or other design chosen, a pleasing appearance.

Left and right flaps, 44 and 46 respectively, are then attached to the surface of blanket 8. The configurations of the two flaps 44 and 46 are such that when they are closed at the closure 42, the two flaps have the shape of the torso 12. The flaps are attached to the surface of blanket 8 at their outside edges 64 by any suitable means such as stitching. When the left flap 44 and right flap 46 are opened at the closure 42, they have the appearance of an open jacket attached at outside edges 64. The surface of blanket 8 which is located under left flap 44 and right flap 46 when they are closed at the closure 42 may carry decorations such as a tie, a heart, a shirt, or any other appropriate appliques which could be made to appear when the flaps are opened at the closure 42, or made to be hidden when the flaps are closed at the closure 42.

Left flap 44 and right flap 46 may each include a passage 40 so that arms 36 can be passed therethrough allowing them to be visible when the flaps 44 and 46 are either closed or opened at the closure 42. Alternatively, a second set of arms 38 may be added in a manner similar to the second ears 32. In such a construction, arms 36 would be visible when the figure were configured in its first configuration, and second arms 38 would be visible when the figure was configured in its second configuration. (See Figure 9)

Converting the convertible figure from its second configuration to its first configuration will now be explained. In its second configuration, the bear appears as an applique or overlay on the surface of blanket 8. In converting the figure to its first configuration, the left flap 44 is detached from right flap 46 at the closure 42. If only one set of arms is employed, as is the case in the preferred embodiment, the first arms 36 are passed through the passages 40 to be visible when the left flap 44 and right flap 46 are laid open on the surface of blanket 8.

Blanket 8 is then flipped over so that the bear is lying face down. The blanket is then rolled and folded in any appropriate way, which in the preferred embodiment comprises folding the blanket by bringing the left outside edge 66 toward the centerline 69 of blanket 8 and the right outside edge 68 also toward the centerline 69 of blanket 8. An appropriate number of folds are made so that the width 70 of the blanket 8 is approximately the same width as the body 2 of the convertible figure. The top edge 72 of blanket 8 is then rolled and/or folded over the head 10; second face 20 is pulled by neck 54 over this folded portion of blanket 8 forming the pocket 28 in which the top portion 26 of blanket is retained. By this maneuver, first face 18 becomes

exposed, and second face 20 becomes concealed within pocket 28.

The bottom edge 74 of blanket 8 is then rolled and/or folded over the torso 12. The left flap 44 and right flap 46 are then brought over this lower portion 48 of blanket 8 and are joined by a means for closing 76 which, in the preferred embodiment, is the same hook and loop feature which comprised the closure 42. The left and right flaps 44 and 46 are then attached to the neck 54 portion of first face 18 by any suitable means such as snaps 78. The bottom portions of the left and right flaps 44 and 46 are attached to the torso 12 by any suitable means such as lower snaps 80. When this conversion process is completed, the convertible figure has the appearance depicted in Figures 1 and 2.

Means for replacing 75 the covering means into the cavity when the figure is converted from its second configuration to its first configuration was shown in the preferred embodiment as the means for closing 76, upper snaps 78, lower snaps 80, left flap 44 and right flap 46.

As can be determined from the prior description, the convertible stuffed figure of the present invention may comprise a first side on the body members forming the torso said first side being visible when the figure is configured in its first configuration, and a second side on the body members forming the torso and being visible when the figure is configured in its second configuration. The first side can be seen in the drawings in Figures 1 and 2 and includes first face 18, ears 30, arms 36, legs 58, left flap 44 and right flap 46. The second side includes second face 20, second ears 32, the other side of left flap 44 and right flap 46, and legs 58. It can also be seen that the means for closing 76 is located on one side of the figure when the figure is configured in its first configuration, and that the means for opening or closure 42 is located on the opposite side of the figure when the figure is configured in its second configuration.

As can be seen from Figure 3, the body members 4, which include second face 20, second ears 32, arms 36, left flap 44 and right flap 46 are adapted to lie substantially flat on the covering means 8 when the figure is configured in its second configuration.

A presently preferred embodiment of the combined soft sculpture and blanket of the present invention is described hereinbelow with reference to Figures 10-15.

The combined soft sculpture and blanket 10' includes a soft-sculptural creature 12' attached to a blanket 14'.

The blanket 14' is shown being generally rectangular, with a front surface 16', a rear surface 18', and an outer perimeter 20', including a left edge 22', a right edge 24', an upper edge 26' and a lower edge 28'. These terms are used in their usual sense, from the perspective of a person using the blanket. No specific limitations not apparently essential are thereby intended. The blanket 14' is shown having a filling of conventional batting 30' and its front surface is shown having a design 32' of applied graphics, e.g. printed fabric.

The soft-sculptural creature 12' is shown exempli-

fied by a polar bear including a head 34 and a torso 36.

The head, by preference, is made of a first, front layer 38' of plush fabric and a second, rear layer 40' of plush fabric, which are superimposed and secured together about their respective outer peripheries, e.g. by stitching 42', except at a location, adjoining the torso, where throughout a minor part of the peripheries, the two layers remain unattached so as to provide a neck opening 44' into the interior 46 of the back half of the head.

By preference, the front half of the head 34' is externally provided with creature-simulation features such as sewn-on plush ears 48', a muzzle 50' with a nose 52', eye buttons 54' and a mouth with a pink flannel interior and a flappable lower jaw. Although all of these features, with the exception of the conventional eye buttons are preferably made of the types of fabric conventionally used in the manufacture of plush toys and dolls, any of them may be made partly or wholly of synthetic plastic molded parts, e.g. the muzzle/mouth/jaw structure, as is conventional in the construction of some plush toys.

The front half of the head 34' is shown further including a stuffing 56' of conventional material such as polyester fleece (pillow stuffing), cotton liners, shredded soft foamed plastic resin (pillow stuffing) or the like such as is conventionally used for stuffing toys and pillows. This stuffing 56' fleshes out the face 58' of the creature so as to make it appear three-dimensional, including its muzzle and the curve of its face, in the preferred embodiment. The stuffing 56' is held in place by a partition wall 60', e.g. made of textile fabric, which has its entire outer peripheral margin sewn to or otherwise attached to the outer peripheral margin of the front layer 38' of the head 34'.

Accordingly, in the preferred embodiment, regardless of whether the blanket 14' is stowed inside the soft-sculptural creature, or is spread outside for use, the front half of the creature's head remains stuffed and that stuffing is directly inaccessible to the person using the article 10'.

The seam which sews the outer margin of the partition wall 60' to the outer margin of the front layer 38' of the head 34' may be the same seam which sews the outer margin of the front layer 38' to the outer margin of the rear layer 40'. Although the front and rear layers are not sewn together across the neck, the front layer and partition wall preferably are sewn together in that region, so that within the creature 12', the actual opening into the cavity 46' provided in the rear half of the head 34' is defined between the partition wall 60' and the rear layer 40'. Externally of the creature, and in a general sense, the opening into the head cavity is provided between the front and rear layers 38', 40' at the bottom of the head 34'.

The back of the head 34' preferably is relatively undecorated so as not to interfere with a cuddling person and so that its appearance is relatively unaffected by whether the cavity 46' is stuffed, or not stuffed (both of which are alternatively the case in the different modes of use of the article 10' as will be further explained).

The torso 36' of the soft-sculptural creature 12' is shown including a front layer 62' and a rear layer 64'. The layers 62' and 64' are preferably made of soft textile fabric such as acrylic plush, nylon plush, cotton plush, or the like (and in general out of any fabric conventionally used in making bodies of dolls, stuffed toys and upholstered furniture, and the like).

The layers 62' and 64' are shown superimposed, each preferably being generally blocky as seen straight-on, e.g. so as to have a generally rounded-corner rectangular outer perimeter. The respective upper edges 66', 68', left edges 70', 72' and right edges 74', 76' of the front and rear layers 62', 64' are cut so as to be able to be placed generally in registry, in the front-to-rear direction, although one of the panels 62', 64' (preferably the front panel 62') is longer so that not only do its left and right edges extend further from its top edge than do the corresponding edges of the rear panel 64', but the lower edge 78' of the front panel is located further from the top edge 66' than is the lower edge 80' of the rear panel 64' from the top edge 68'.

The front panel 38' of the head 34' is shown sewn along its lower margin (i.e. perimetrically of the front half of the neck opening 44') to the upper margin 66' of the front panel 62' of the torso, these two edges preferably being of at least generally equal breadth. Likewise, the rear panel 40' of the head 34' is shown sewn along its lower margin (i.e. perimetrically of the rear half of the neck opening 44') to the upper margin 68' of the rear panel 64' of the torso, these two edges preferably being of at least generally equal breadth. The panels 38', 40' thus depend from the head 34' by means of the seams just described.

The soft-sculptural creature 12' is joined to the blanket 14', preferably permanently, preferably by sewing. By preference, this is accomplished by holding the front and rear panels 62', 64' of the torso 36' apart from below, inserting the top edge 26' of the blanket 14' between them, and advancing the edge of the blanket relatively upwards until the neckline 44' is at least generally coincident with the upper edge 26' of the blanket. In this condition, the front panel 62' of the torso drapes down over the front surface 16' of the blanket and the rear panel 64' of the torso drapes down over the rear surface 18' of the blanket. In this state, the front panel 62' is attached, e.g. by sewing, to the blanket 14', e.g. by a row of stitching 82' which extends in a rounded-corner rectangular shape bounding the left edge, top edge and right edge of the front panel 62', and which crosses the front panel at 84' in a left-right sense at approximately the same level as the lower edge 80' of the rear panel. Accordingly, a lower part of the front panel, i.e. from the portion 84' of the row of stitching 82', to the lower edge 78' is connected to the blanket 14' only by the stitching 82' and so depends from the stitching portion 84' as a lower flap 86' of the front panel 62'.

The facing surfaces of the left margins of the front and rear panels are provided with cooperable unfastenable fastener means 88', 90'. (Strips of Velcro hook and fleece fastener material is shown, and preferred, but zippers, hooks and eyes, buttons and buttonholes, tacky adhesive strips and the like

could be used.) The facing surfaces of the right margins of the front and rear panels are shown likewise provided with cooperable unfastenable fastener means 92', 94', as are the lower margins of the front and rear layers (although in the latter instance, the fasteners preferably are constituted by rows of buttons and corresponding button holes 96', 98').

In the preferred embodiment which is illustrated, the soft-sculptural creature 12' is substantially narrower, in a left to right sense, than is the blanket 14'. And rather than being centered on the imaginary centerline which bifurcates the blanket 14' into left and right halves, or being disposed with one of its lateral extremes coincident with a corner or side edge of the blanket 14', the soft-sculptural creature is disposed part way, e.g. mid-way between those locations. The reason for this preference should be apparent from looking at Figure 10. It permits a person to be covered by the blanket 14', with about as much of them sticking out from under the top edge as the soft-sculptural creature 12' protrudes in the same direction, with the blanket 14' centered in a left-to-right sense on a bed, or equivalent sleep surface, and for the person to be able to put an arm, or arms around the neck of the soft-sculptural creature, in a natural way, as if the person and the soft-sculptural creature were sleeping side-by-side in a bed.

When the blanket 14' is being used as a covering, none of the fasteners 88' - 98' are in a fastened condition and the rear layer 64' of the torso may either hang down against the underside 18' of the blanket 14, or, preferably, it may be rolled, folded or wadded-up and stuffed into the head cavity 46', so that even in this disposition, both the front and back of the head 34' are plumped-out and apparently stuffed.

When the blanket 14' is not being used, and a desire exists to convert the article 10' into a closer simulation of a stuffed plush toy or soft-sculptural object, the rear layer 64' of the torso is unstuffed from the head cavity 46' (if that is where it is), and the blanket is rolled, folded and/or wadded-up, e.g. until its perimeter lies within the imaginary boundary line 100' (which generally matches the size, shape and orientation of a combination of the head cavity 46', and a torso cavity 102' defined between the front and rear panels 62', 64' above the lower flap 86'). Then, the upper part 104' of the folded blanket is stuffed into the head cavity 46', the lower part 106' is confined in the cavity 102' between the front and rear panels 62', 64', the flap 86' is wrapped under the lower part 106' of the folded blanket to constitute a bottom for the soft-sculptural creature, and the sets of fasteners 88' and 90', 92' and 94', and 96' and 98' are fastened respectively at the left, the right and the bottom-rear of the soft-sculptural creature, substantially completely enclosing the blanket 14, and simultaneously providing a stuffing for the soft-sculptural object.

Depending on the type of creature which the object 12' may depict, various appendages may be attached to respectively visually-appropriate sites on the various panels of the head and/or torso of the

object 12'. Such appendages may simulate, e.g. tentacles, legs/feet, arms (or forelegs)/hands (or paws), tails, antennae, horns, antlers, warts, armor plates, fins, pseudopods, tongues, ganglia and the like. In the instance depicted, these appendages are made of stuffed plush fabric and include arms (or forelegs) 108' attached by one-ends to the front panel, e.g. near the left and right margins of the front panel, but inwards of the respective fasteners sufficiently so as to avoid interference therewith, and legs 110' attached by one-ends to the front panels above the flap 86', e.g. along the sewing line which defines the upper edge of the flap panel. The arms and legs thus are positioned to remain outside the cavity, and visible at the front, regardless of whether the blanket is spread out, or is folded into the joint cavity 46', 102' and the fasteners 88' - 98' closed. It should be noticed that the front of the torso remains the front regardless of which of these two dispositions the blanket is in, so that paws, feet, hooves, etc. 112' provided near the free outer ends of the appendages 108', 110' can have a natural look (rather than needing to be stubs as would be the case for a torso which reversed roles from front to back as the blanket changed dispositions).

The inner surfaces of the back panel of the torso and of the flap 86', which are subject to being seen when the blanket is in its outer disposition may be lined, e.g. with a decorative lining fabric 114', which may also conceal a thin stuffing layer, e.g. of batting.

It would not depart from the principles of the invention to provide the blanket with one or more appendages which protruded out of the body cavity when the blanket was otherwise substantially completely enclosed in the body cavity.

It should now be apparent that the combined soft sculpture and blanket as described hereinabove, possesses each of the attributes set forth in the specification under the heading "Summary of the Invention" hereinbefore. Because it can be modified to some extent without departing from the principles thereof as they have been outlined and explained in this specification, the present invention should be understood as encompassing all such modifications as are within the spirit and scope of the following claims.

Claims

1. A convertible figure, comprising:

a blanket having an outer surface and an inner surface and having edges forming an outer perimeter;

a soft sculptural creature including:

a torso portion including a first layer having an outer perimeter, said torso first layer being attached about at least a major portion of the outer perimeter thereof to said front surface of said blanket;

a head portion including a first layer adjoining said torso portion first layer and a second layer, both of said layers of said head portion having respective outer perimeters and

one of said layers of said head portion being attached to the other about a major portion of its own outer perimeter, but not at a minor portion adjacent said torso portion, so as to define an opening into said head portion adjacent said torso portion between said first layer of said head portion and said second layer of said head portion;

said torso portion also including a second layer having an outer perimeter, said torso portion second layer including an upper edge, left and right edges and a lower edge;

means for securing said torso second layer at said left and right edges thereof so as to adjoin corresponding portions of said torso first layer;

means for securing said torso second layer along said upper edge thereof to said second layer of said head portion adjacent said opening into said head portion;

means for securing said torso second layer along said lower edge thereof to said torso first layer so as to adjoin a corresponding portion of said torso first layer,

whereby said first layer and said second layer of said torso define between them a torso cavity;

at least two of said means for securing being disengageably engageable so as to permit said torso cavity to be opened and closed;

said blanket, while remaining attached to said first layer of said torso portion, being selectively positionable in two alternate positions, including:

a first position in which said blanket is condensed by at least one of rolling and folding and is stuffed substantially completely into said soft-sculptural creature so as to be disposed partly in said torso cavity and partly in said head portion through said opening into said head portion, and

a second position in which said blanket is located outside said head and said torso cavity of said soft-sculptural creature and spread so that a person may be covered by the blanket with said head portion and at least one of said layers of said torso visible from in front of the blanket; and

means defining a creature face disposed externally on said first layer of said head portion when said blanket is disposed in said first position.

2. The convertible figure of claim 1, wherein:

said soft-sculptural creature further includes at least one elongated appendage having opposite ends including a free end, and an end secured to said blanket so as to adjoin a respective said edge of said torso rear layer.

3. The convertible figure of claim 2, wherein:

said at least one elongated appendage comprises a left arm and a right arm which respectively adjoin said left and right edges of said rear layer of said torso portion.

4. The convertible figure of claim 2, wherein:

said at least one elongated appendage comprises a left leg and a right leg which respectively adjoin said lower edge of said rear layer of said torso portion.

5. The convertible of claim 4, wherein:

said left leg and said right leg are disposed to remain outside said torso cavity and outside said head portion as said blanket is moved between said first position and said second position.

6. The convertible figure of claim 2, wherein:

said appendage is provided with a representation of an anatomical feature which faces forwardly of said soft-sculptural creature both when said blanket is in said first position and when said blanket is in said second position.

7. The convertible figure of claim 6, wherein:

said appendage is an arm and said representation of an anatomical feature is of a hand or paw.

8. A combined soft sculpture and blanket, comprising:

a blanket having a front surface, a back surface and an outer perimeter including and edge; and

a soft-sculptural object including a head portion connected with a torso portion at a neck having a perimeter;

said torso portion including a front panel made of flexible fabric and a back panel made of flexible fabric; each of said panels having a top edge, a left edge, a right edge and a bottom edge;

said top edges of said front and back panels being secured to said head along complementary portions of the perimeter of said neck;

one of said panels being substantially longer than the other so that each of said panels has a corresponding main portion, but the longer one of them in addition has a lower flap portion;

one of said panels being disposed facewise against one of said surfaces of said blanket with the top edge of such panel adjacent and extending along said edge of said blanket, with said head portion protruding beyond said outer perimeter of said blanket at said edge portion;

means securing the main portion of the last-mentioned said panel, perimetricaly thereof to said blanket;

complementary securement means provided on said main portions of said panels along left edges of said panels;

complementary securement means provided on said main portions of said panels along right edges of said panels; and

complementary securement means provided on said lower flap portion of said longer one of said panels along the bottom edge thereof, and on the main portion of the other of said panels along the bottom edge thereof;

said combined soft sculpture and blanket having:

a first disposition in which said complementary securement means are unsecured and said blanket is spread-out, and

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said edge of said perimeter of said blanket has two laterally opposite ends and said soft-sculptural object is disposed intermediate an imaginary longitudinally centerline of said blanket and one of said ends, so as to be laterally spaced from both said one end and said imaginary longitudinal centerline.

17. The combined soft sculpture and blanket of claim 16, wherein:

said head portion is at least partly hollow so as to have an open internal cavity which communicates through said neck with said torso between said front and back panels; and

in said second disposition of said blanket, part of said blanket is received within said cavity of said head portion;

said head portion comprises a front panel perimetrically attached to a rear panel except across said neck;

said front and back panels of said head portion are made of flexible fabric;

said flexible fabric of said head portion and said torso portion are made at least predominately of textile fabric;

a partition wall received within said head portion and extending therein and being secured thereto so as to isolate a closed front half cavity of said head portion from an open rear half cavity, which communicates through said neck with said torso between said front and back panels of said torso;

a creature face simulation applied to said head portion so as to be visible externally of said soft-sculptural object, said closed front half cavity of said head portion containing a filling stuffing material;

said creature face simulation includes a muzzle and said filling of stuffing material is received within said muzzle from behind so as to add a three-dimensional quality to said soft-sculptural object;

the one of said panels which is disposed on said one surface of said blanket and is attached to said blanket about a major portion of the perimeter thereof is said front panel of said torso portion; and

in said first disposition of said combined soft sculpture and blanket, said back panel of said torso portion is condensed and stowed in said open cavity of said head portion.

18. A convertible figure comprising:

a body including first and second body members for forming a head and a torso;

portions of both said first and said second body members defining a cavity within said head and said torso;

covering means attached to at least one of said body members, said covering means being adapted to fit into and be enclosed within said cavity in a first configuration of said convertible figure and to be removed from and be disposed outside of said cavity in a second configuration of said convertible figure;

said head including a first face provided on said first body members and disposed to be visible when said figure is configured in said first configuration, and a second face provided on said second body members and disposed to be visible when said figure is configured in said second configuration.

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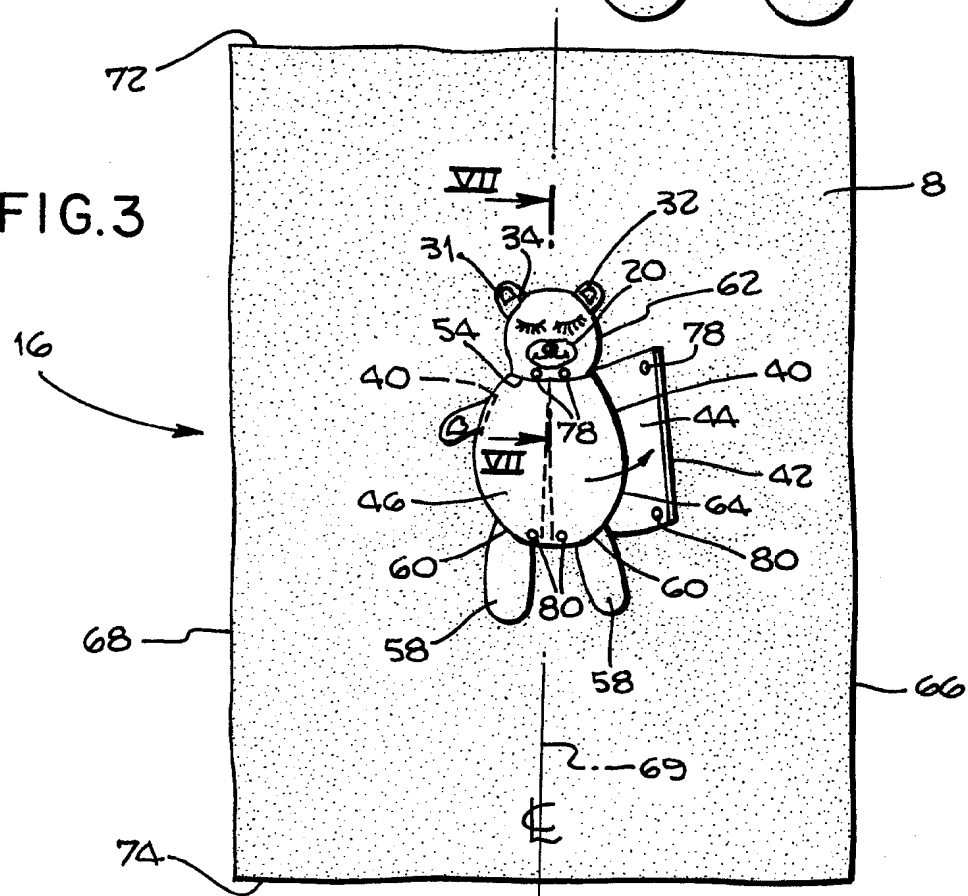


Fig. 5

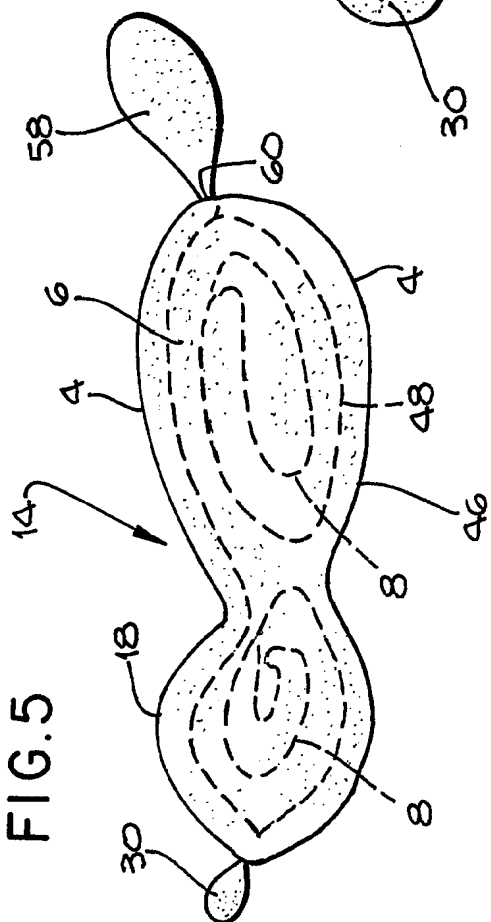


FIG. 6

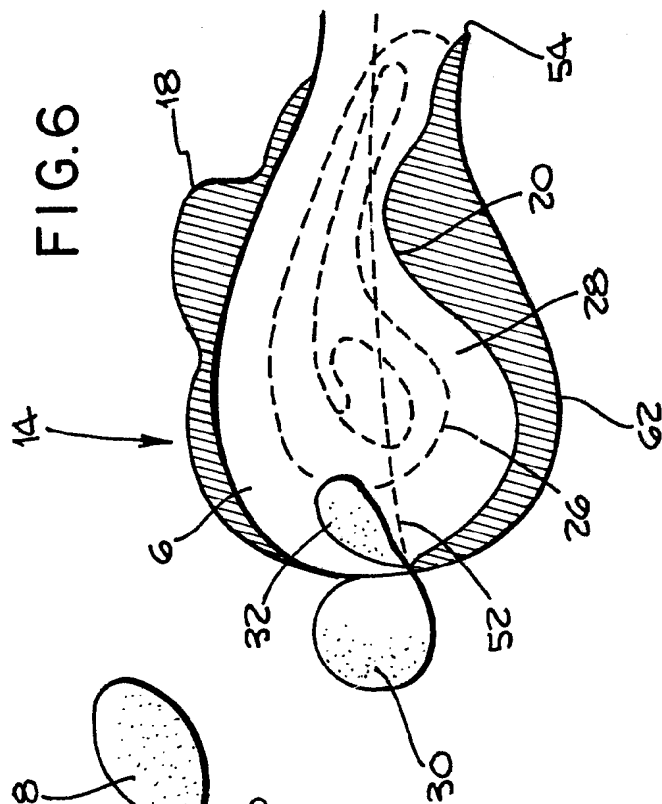
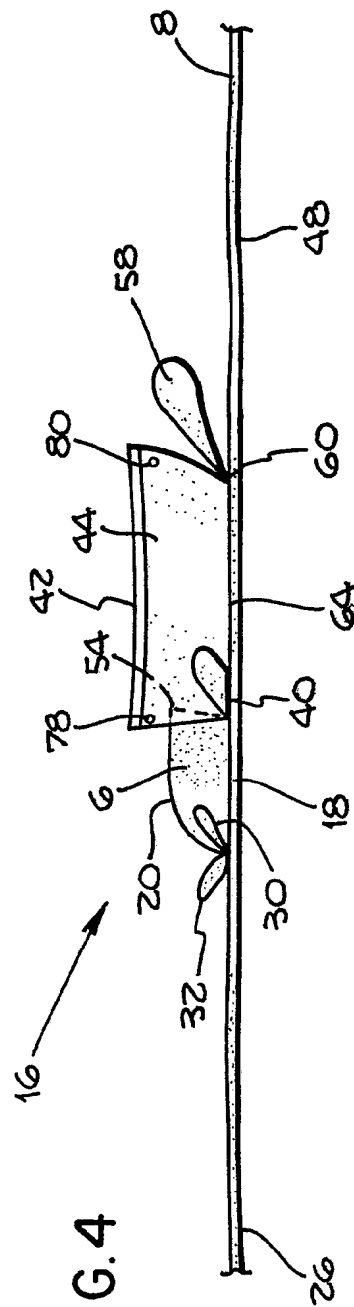


FIG. 4



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FIG.10

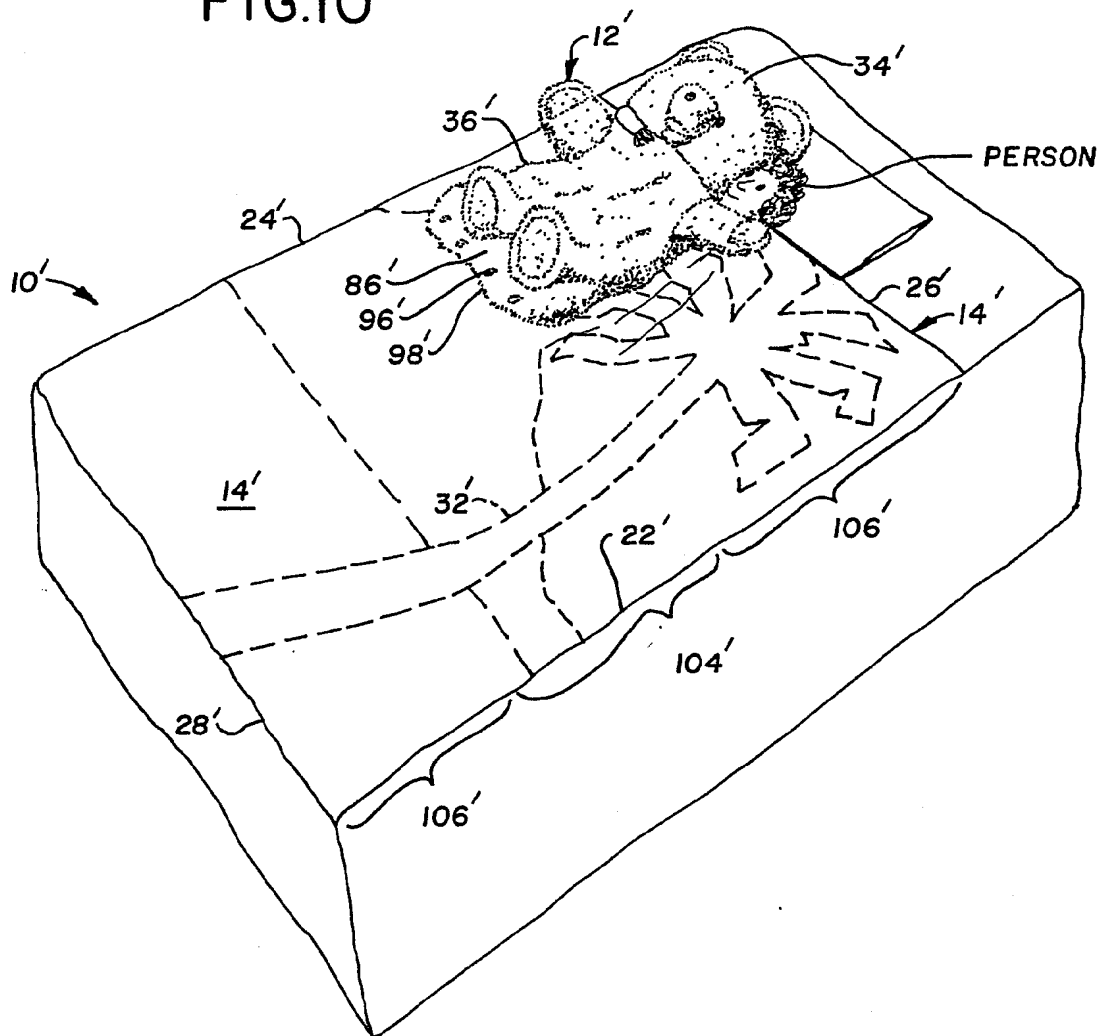
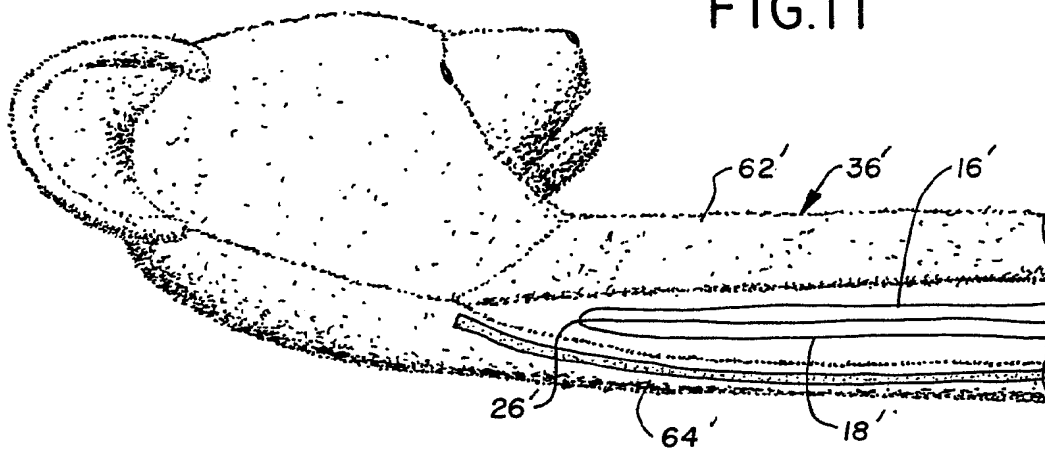


FIG.11



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FIG.12

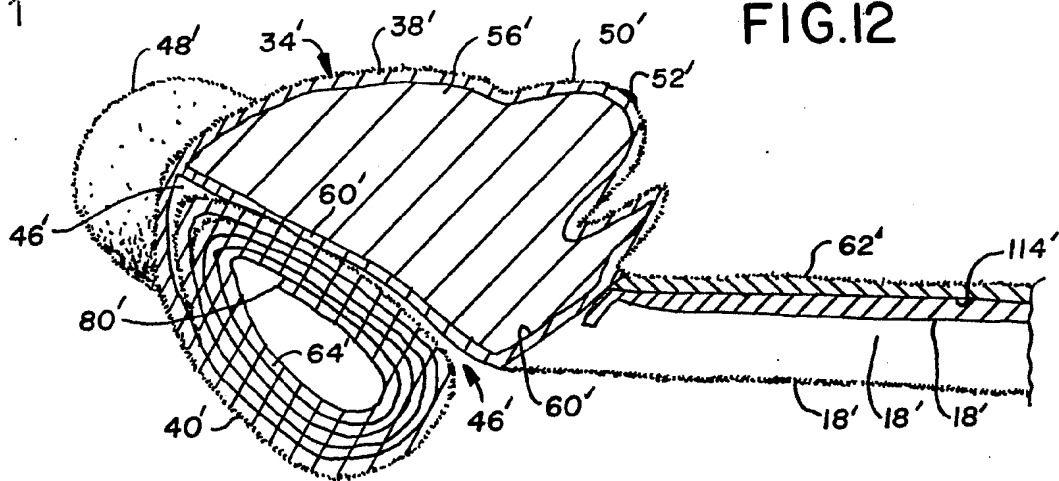
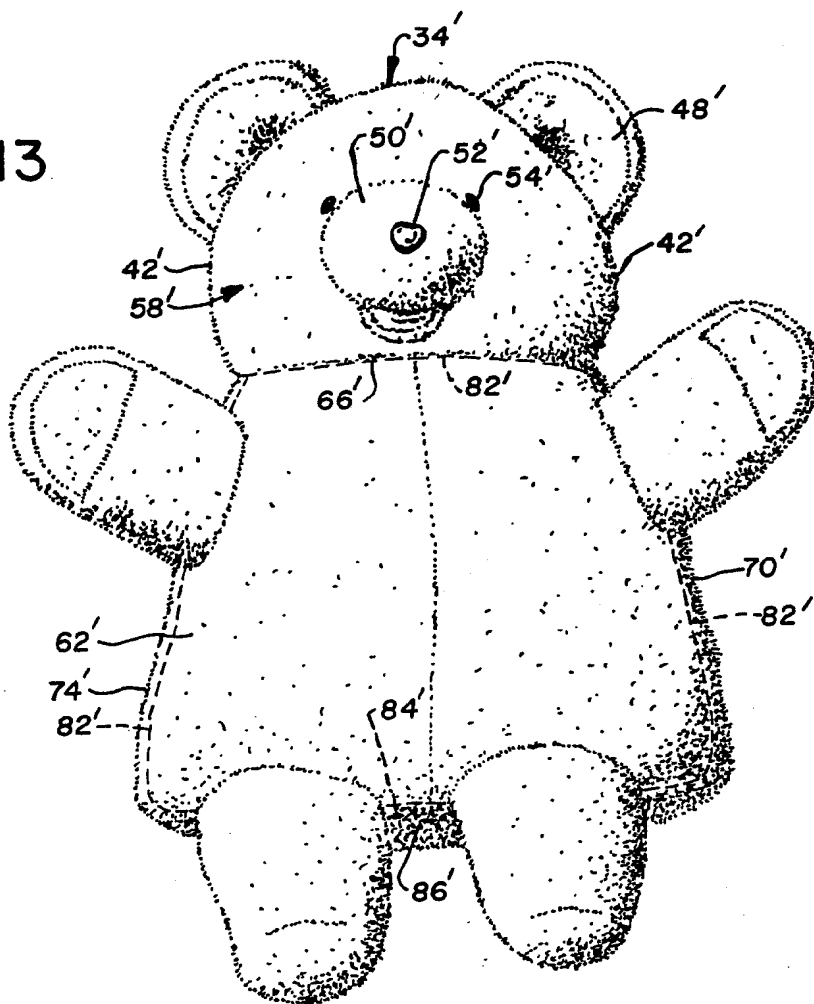


FIG.13



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FIG.14

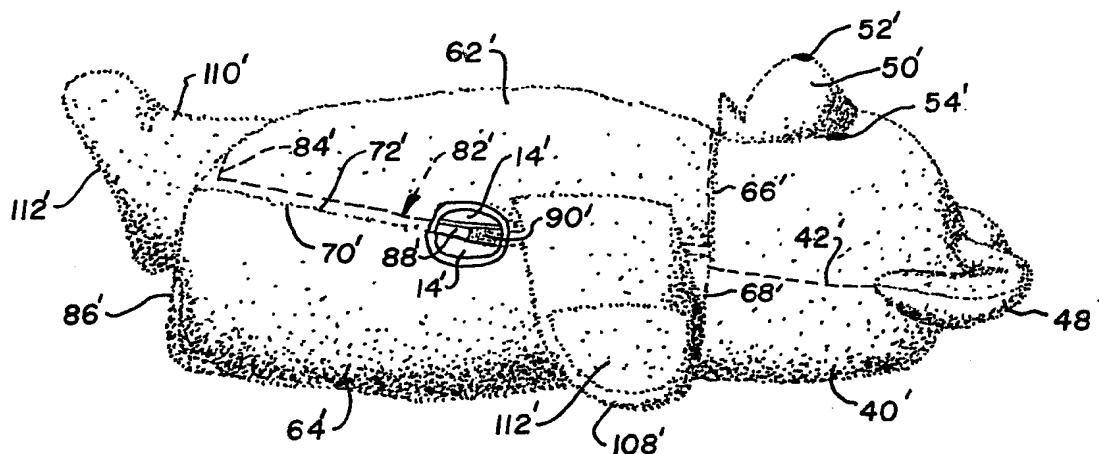


FIG.15

